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VANINA SUMROVA, *NEW FEMINITIVES IN BULGARIAN*, PUBLISHED BY THE BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE “PROF. MARIN DRINOV”, SOFIA 2018, PP. 196. (ВАНИНА СУМРОВА, НОВИТЕ ФЕМИНАЛНИ НАЗВАНИЯ В БЪЛГАРСКИЯ ЕЗИК, ИЗДАТЕЛСТВО НА БАН „ПРОФ. МАРИН ДРИНОВ“, СОФИЯ 2018, СС. 196.)

Abstract

This investigation by Vanina Ivanova Sumrova is the first independent and comprehensive study of a lexico-semantic group of neologisms in Bulgarian: new terms denoting women – known as feminitives – that have appeared within the twenty-five years since 1989. More than 1,400 terms are covered; single-word terms, as well as open or closed two-element compounds (of the type *biznes sekretarka* or *bg mama*), some of them until now unattested to in studies or dictionaries. The terms are analysed from several perspectives: morphology, semantics, stylistics, codification, sociolinguistics, social culturology, lexicography, and possibilities for future development; all contributing to the multifaceted character of the study.

Keywords: feminitives; Bulgarian language; neologisms; neosemantisms

1 Introduction

In recent years, a number of articles and papers have been published on the subject of creating contemporary feminine names for jobs and job titles. Many of these works are didactic in nature, others are critical, and some compare contemporary Bulgarian feminine names with their equivalents in other contemporary languages. It would be difficult to list all these publications, yet it is worth mentioning at least those authors whose work has permanently entered into scientific discourse and is frequently cited. The following is a list of some of the most important books and papers regarding the Bulgarian language: N. Aleksieva (2006, 2007), J. Baltova (2012), D. Blagoeva (2013b), V. Bondzholova (2007), C. Georgieva (2013), S. Kolkovska (2012), V. Murdarov (2010), E. Pernishka (2010), V. Radeva (2017), V. Zidarova (2014). Works comparing Bulgarian with other contemporary languages include: C. Avramova (2003, 2006), D. Blagoeva (2013a), and more recently: M. Koshkova i J. Satoła-Staškowiak (Koškova & Satoła-Staškowiak, 2017).

V. Sumrova should also be included in the lists above – she is an academic from the Bulgarian Language Institute (part of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia), whose first comprehensive study comprises 1,400 new (from the last 25 years) Bulgarian feminities¹

While compiling her work, V. Sumrova conducted a thorough inquiry. A substantial part of the data comes from such dictionaries as *Rechnik na novite dumii v bulgarskiia ezik (ot kraia na XX i pŭrvoto desetiletie na XXI v.)* (passim: РНДБЕ) (Речник на новите думи в българския език (от края на XX и първото десетилетие на XXI в.) by E. Pernishka, D. Blagoeva i S. Kolkovska (Sofia, 2010, pp. 515; Pernishka, Blagoeva, & Kolkovska, 2010) – the most extensive collection of Bulgarian neologisms, as well as a dictionary titled *Rechnik na novite dumii i znacheniiia v bulgarskiia ezik* (passim: РНДЗБЕ) (Речник на новите думи и значения в българския език) by the same authors (Sofia, 2003, pp. 309; Pernishka, Blagoeva, & Kolkovska, 2003). The excerpted data also comes from numerous lexicographical works that fragmentarily investigated the subject matter, as well as randomly selected issues of some of the most popular newspapers in Bulgaria such as: *24 chasa* (24 часа), *Duma* (Дума), *Demokratsia* (Демокрация), *Novinar* (Новинар), *Standard* (Стандарт), *Dneven Trud* (Дневен Труд), *Noshten Trud* (Нощен Труд). Data was also obtained from the internet (forums, chat rooms, blogs etc.).

Traditional field work was replaced by the use of internet browsers and the research data thus amassed has been presented by the author in an insightful and interesting collection of lexical items which undergo a complex and varied analysis (of their structure, semantics, function and peculiarities), thus developing a consistent argument supported by a wealth of examples. The author's observations on the position of feminities in the Bulgarian language are detailed and described in an interesting manner, including conclusions and the most significant reasons for their emergence, taking into account changes in Bulgaria and the world in such spheres as the socio-political, economic, technical, military, cultural, scientific, ideological, and religious, as well as changes in values systems.

Formally, the “new words”² belong to different parts of speech (they are nouns, adjectives, verbs, and phrases created by combinations thereof). Some of these new items have an exclusively nominative character while others are expressive.

The monograph covers the “media revolution” (Znepolski, 1997) and the invasion of colloquialism thereof, which played a significant role in the revival/construction process of new Bulgarian lexis. The author states, after V. Tabakova (Tabakova, 1995, p. 81), that in both Europe and in Bulgaria “women constitute a majority of the country's population” (p. 9) and it is there-

¹In 2018, when Vanina Sumrova published the monograph, Poland celebrated the centenary of the women's franchise. It is probable that the unprecedented increase in interest in feminities that year was related to this fact. Conversations were initiated by persons or groups previously not involved in the subject. For social, political and economic reasons, a similar interest has been noted in Bulgaria, where women were only granted the franchise only 1944.

²The author has taken into consideration those feminities which have already entered the system of the Bulgarian language and whose existence is supported by a wealth of evidence. In doing so, she has managed to eliminate occasionalisms, which do not have the status of the neologisms she describes.

fore important to follow linguistic processes and illustrate their impact with specific examples in Bulgarian.

2 Methodology of the description

In her research, V. Sumrova employs the traditional method of linguistic description based on observation and analysis conducted using a structural, semantic, functional-pragmatic, socio-linguistic, socio-cultural and forward-looking approach. On the one hand, it is in line with the approaches used in comparative studies, while on the other the presented items are analysed using various aspects: word-building, semantic, stylistic, normative, socio-linguistic, socio-cultural, lexicographical, and prognostic. This gives the monograph a complex character and makes it stand out among the existing research on feminities in Bulgarian and other languages (e.g. Russian).

The reviewed work contains 196 pages and includes an introduction, six chapters, a summary, an index of abbreviations, a bibliography, and a list of lexical and semantic feminine neologisms.

In the introduction (Sumrova, 2018, pp. 7–24) the reader is presented with the general characteristics of the subject matter, tendencies in the creation and use of feminities since 1989, a number of lexical-semantic research publications fundamental for the work, the aims of the work and its scope, and the methods employed. The terminology apparatus and the criteria for the use of specific scientific terms are an important part of this section. Especially important is the distinction made by the author between neologisms and occasionalisms. Without this distinction, it would be impossible to consider new feminine names. The introduction also includes a description of the data sources of the monograph.

In the first chapter (Sumrova, 2018, pp. 25–65), titled *Nomination Techniques*, the author presents contemporary techniques of neologism creation (word-building, neo-semanticisation, loan words) and illustrates them with an ample number of examples and references to scientific literature. These techniques of creating new words are divided into groups and sub-groups (based on suffixation, composition, univerbalisation etc.) in order to allow even a novice reader to familiarise oneself with the ongoing feminine processes in Bulgarian and to draw one's own conclusions. For researchers in other languages, the work effectively supports confrontative research, allowing for comparisons to be made with other languages (e.g. Slavic languages).

In the second chapter, titled *Classification*, V. Sumrova assesses the described lexis using criteria she deems important – word-building, semantics (*фараонка* (на финансова пирамида), *наставничка* 'треньорка', *шаманка* 'политичка, общественичка, която ръководи, насочва някого или нещо', *каналджийка* 'жена каналджия'), stylistics (*аверка*, *рокаджийка*, *блусарка*, *чалгаджийка*, *бензинджийка*, *аграрничка*, *аграрка*, *агиткаджийка*, *халтураджийка*, *папарачка*, *естрадничка*, *фараонка*, *мутреса*, *свежарка*, *небрежарка*, *костюмарка*, *въздухарка*, *анонимничка*, *алтернативничка*), literary norms (*министърка*, *прокурорка*, *съдийка*, *деканка*, *войничка*, *лейтенантка*, *офицерка*), and historical perspective, which she deems the most important in the process of defining new lexis. It is here that the critical distinction between new and occasional lexis is made. The following examples are included as occasionalisms (significantly limited by the context, time and communicative situation): *плажорка*, *моржка*, *адреналинка*, *рачка*, *айсикютка*, *донжуанка*, *педерасткиня*, *талантливка*, *перхидролка*, *небрежарка*, *безхаберничка*, *баладжийка*, *прекрасничка*, *ненагледница*, *недостъпница*, *разкошка*, *случайка*, *претенциозка*, *меркантилка*, *мъжемелачка*.

In the third chapter (Sumrova, 2018, pp. 81–124), titled *The Masculinisation of Nouns*, the researcher describes the Bulgarian language practice of masculinising Bulgarian nouns, which spans the last eighty years. She refers to numerous bibliographical sources, as well as the phenomena characteristic of this process and its causes. She successfully attempts to clarify the reasons behind the masculinisation process and its duration. She also describes the interesting phenomena of self-naming by women and language discomfort – the problems the process of masculinisation has created, which result in language difficulties and errors. (**Министърът** на земеделието и горите

Десислава Танева и заместниците му (примерът е от архива на Службата за езикови справки в ИБЕ при БАН); Съдии от СГС поискаха оставката на **председателя** *Владимира Янева* и заместниците му; **Моят психотерапевт** казва, че [...] и затова спрях да **я** посещавам (cf. Sumrova, 2018, p. 104)).

Masculinisation and gender equality are important topics which are examined in this chapter. Sumrova refers to the opinions of other researchers and illustrates them with examples. She concludes the chapter with a claim that “masculinisation is a complex deterministic phenomenon” (cf. Sumrova, 2018, p. 114) and remarks that the description of masculinisation depends on the point and type of reference, language tradition, and many other factors – semantic, grammatical, stylistic, socio-linguistic and – according to some authors – phonetic and word-building. The treatment of these topics is supplemented with the results of a survey, conducted by the author for the purposes of this monography, pertaining to the process of masculinisation and aiming to ascertain if masculinisation is present in spoken language and if it creates any problems. The survey is not representative, as the sample group is too small, so the facts are interpreted from a linguistic perspective, rather than from a socio-linguistic viewpoint. In the fourth chapter (Sumrova, 2018, pp. 125–136), titled *The Peculiarities of Neofeminities*, V. Sumrova groups neofeminities according to:

1. Paradigmatic features (synonyms, homonyms, antonyms and paronyms). The majority of these are synonyms (such as the correlates of masculine forms e.g.: *форумка*, *форумджийка* and *форумистка* < *форумец*, *форумджия* and *форумист*, *телевизионистка* and *телевизионерка* < *телевизионист* and *телевизионер*, *атакаджийка* and *атакистка* < *атакаджия* and *атакист*, *меверейка* and *меверистка* < *мевереец* and *меверист*, *запалянка* and *запалянкoвкa* < *запалянкo* and *запалянкoвeц*, *чалгаджийка* and *чалгарка* < *чалгаджия* and *чалгар*, and many others), a second group are homonyms (eg: *пицарка*, which has two meanings: a) ‘a chef, a specialist in preparing pizza’ and b) ‘a woman who likes pizza very much’) and the smallest group are antonyms (eg: *антиамериканка* – *проамериканка*, *антиевропейка* – *проевропейка* and *светофилка* – *светофобка*, *американофилка* – *американофобка*, *еврофилка* – *еврофобка*, *ислямoфилка* – *ислямoфобка*, *хомoфилка* – *хомoфобка*). Paronymy occurs in only two lexemes (*плейбойка* and *плебейка*).
2. Grammatical features, where she provides examples of the use of a lexeme to describe a man or a woman eg: *костюмарка*, *небрежарка*, *свежарка* and *комунарка*. “*Момчето изглежда голяма свежарка; Гарo не e ли найголямата свежарка в шоуто!; Батето верно си e абсолютна свежарка; Беше кална, долнопробна комунарка!* (cf. Sumrova, 2018, p. 135).
3. Semantic features (treated elsewhere in the monograph), illustrated here with the example of the neo-semantic *пиацаджийка* (meaning ‘a prostitute’).

In the fifth chapter, titled *New Feminities in Their Cultural-Linguistic Aspect*, V. Sumrova discusses the contemporary image of women projected by the feminities. She synthetically presents and discusses the areas in which a specific feminine name most frequently finds its connotations. Feminine job titles or names related to jobs are the most numerous group of new lexis (for example, through the use of the suffix *манк(a)* and *хoличк(a)* or *маниачка*, which is mentioned in the monography (see *ароматoманка*, *блoгoманка*, *графитoманка*, *маркoманка*, *мелoманка*, *телeманка*, *хeрoинoманка*, *сексoманка*, *epтoманка*; *рaбoтoхoличкa*, *интepнeтoхoличкa*, *нeтoхoличкa*, *пaзapoxoличкa*, *шoпингxoличкa*, *шoпoxoличкa*, *сексoхoличкa*, *apтxoличкa*, *книгoxoличкa*, *кaфeтoxoличкa*) (cf. Sumrova, 2018, p. 138).

Other excerpted neofeminities direct reader’s attention to the representatives of social classes. The words *хайлайфаджийка*, *хайлафка*, *хайдама*, *хайжeнa* indicate society’s excessive interest in women hailing from the upper classes, political life, show business, and pop culture as a whole. The following lexemes indicate the acknowledgement of minorities: *ромка*, *мургaвa*,

мургавелка, смугла. A number of new lexemes describe women living with influential or affluent men, who play a decisive role in determining their social status: *президентша, премиерша, министърпредседателша, депутатша, дипломатша, сенаторша, канцлерша*. Other new lexemes describe the adolescent daughters of these men: *тийнейджърка, тийнка, юношка, пуберка, пубертетка*.

A substantial part of the examples put forward by V. Sumrova relate to appearance, fashion, interests, relationships with others: *аутсайдерка*, and the perception of women by a specific group. Some have a belittling and derogatory value: *перхидролка, силиконка*. Some, on the contrary, thanks to character traits or skills, have a positive value: *перфекционистка, свежарка, рамбовка*. The author makes a rather lofty conclusion in the summary of this chapter, in which she claims that ‘the heroes of our times’ are not only men, but also women. The image of the modern woman is now presented through her professional work, her political, religious or sexual orientation, and her interests or addictions. Feminine names reflect women’s various characteristics, quirks and society’s reaction to them or the groups they represent. According to V. Sumrova, they paint an image radically different from that of the past. This image, albeit not as comprehensive or insightful, emerges from other recent linguistic works far less comprehensive than Sumrova’s.

In the sixth chapter, titled *Aspects of the Lexicographical Presentation of Feminities* (Sumrova, 2018, pp. 144–148), the author discusses past and current problems with the way new feminities are presented in dictionaries and lexicons. Among many remarks made, the author accentuates past debates, as well as ongoing contemporary discussions, regarding the presentation of feminities (as separate entries) next to their existing masculine counterparts and the possibility of recording the frequency of use of some of the new feminities so as to allow them to be included in Bulgarian language dictionaries, and thus be differentiated from irrelevant occasionalisms. The author rightly emphasises the role played by language corpora which, thanks to processed metadata, are able to identify the source and to indicate the frequency of use of a given excerpt of a lexical item.

The conclusions presented by the author in the *Summary* appear to be in line with those drawn from other pieces of research done in this field and they suggest that contemporary Bulgarian does not have any formal limitations – semantic, phonetic, morphological, or stylistic – which would impede the process of creating new feminities which can fill potentially empty spaces with ease.

The author, in her research on neofeminities, meticulously presents the positions taken by various linguists. She enters into a polemic with some, deliberately and justifiably, in her claim that neologisms should not be treated as unstable language items – a view supported by some linguists – nor should their lexicographical value be diminished due to their colloquiality. In V. Sumrova’s opinion, it is only a matter of time before many of the examples cited in the monograph are treated as stylistically neutral and are firmly rooted in the language system. As articulated and assumed at the start of the thesis, the theoretical and methodological assumptions make for a precise and interesting description of the excerpted items.

The monograph reviewed here, the first of its kind of such comprehensiveness, spans twenty-five years since the transformation of 1989. It illustrates and exemplifies over 1,400 items, which allows for a broad perspective on the wide spectrum of phenomena involving feminities. Rigorous presentation standards and lucid language are additional strengths, and make the work an accessible source of information, not only for academics, but also for all those with a stake in maintaining standards of communication in Bulgarian (students, journalists, enthusiasts and ordinary language users). It is also an interesting source of information for sociologists and researchers of contemporary feminism.

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